



Security Council

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Letter dated 4 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith an appeal from Khojaly refugees addressed to the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the occasion of the eleventh year of the Khojaly massacre perpetrated by the Armenian armed forces in 1992.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar Aliyev
Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 4 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Appeal from the Khojaly refugees addressed to the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

In appealing to the United Nations, the Council of Europe (CE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which are authoritative international organizations, we wish to bring to the attention of world public opinion the truth about the Khojaly genocide perpetrated by Armenian armed units in the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan in February 1992 and to ensure that this bloody crime is given a legal and political assessment.

Any person who is acquainted with the history of Azerbaijan knows that the town of Khojaly, which is situated in the mountainous part of Karabakh and has existed from the third millennium before the Common Era, is one of the ancient settlements of Azerbaijan. The unique archaeological finds and historic monuments discovered during excavations carried out in the territory of the town of Khojaly are clear proof of this.

The Armenians, who erected a monument in 1978 in the Nagorny Karabakh region on the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the resettlement of their ancestors from Persia to Azerbaijan, have, in order to achieve the realization of the illusion of "Greater Armenia" at the expense of the historic lands of Azerbaijan, consistently carried out over the past two centuries, with the help of their patrons abroad, an aggressive policy directed against Azerbaijan and, at different periods, have resorted to such crimes against humanity as monstrous acts of terror, mass bloodshed, deportation and genocide in order to attain this insidious goal.

Numerous historical documents demonstrate that millions of Azerbaijanis, who were subjected, during the years 1905-1907, 1918-1920 and 1948-1953 to a policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide in their historic ethnic territories, were in massive numbers murdered and deported from their native lands.

In 1988 Armenian separatists again put forward unfounded territorial claims against Azerbaijan and provoked a new wave of anti-Azerbaijani feeling in Nagorny Karabakh and the territory of Armenia. In 1998 and 1999, more than 250,000 Azerbaijanis, who had lived in their historic ethnic lands in Armenia, were deported. The deportation was accompanied by mass killings of peaceful Azerbaijani inhabitants.

Unfortunately, the bitter suffering of the innocent Azerbaijani population as a result of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict that was provoked in 1988 was met with indifferent silence on the part of the leaders of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the civilized world. Encouraged by this situation, the Armenians resorted to a policy of genocide against Azerbaijanis and committed unprecedented historic crimes, one after the other. Armenia's armed forces occupied 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan, including seven administrative districts

that were not part of the Nagorny Karabakh region; more than a million Azerbaijanis were barbarously expelled from their native lands, and tens of thousands of people were murdered, maimed and taken hostage. Hundreds of settlements and thousands of public and cultural buildings, educational and health-care institutions, cultural and historic monuments, mosques, holy places of pilgrimage and cemeteries were obliterated from the face of the earth or subjected to vandalism by Armenians.

The tragedies perpetrated by Armenian armed units during the first years of the conflict in Karabakh villages such as Kyarkijakhan, Meshali, Gushchular, Garadagly, Agdaban and others where Azerbaijanis lived are historic crimes which will remain forever as a black stain on the conscience of the "long-suffering Armenian nation".

On 26 February 1992, the Khojaly genocide was added to the list of such tragedies as Khatyn, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Song My.

On the night of 25/26 February 1992, Armenian illegal armed units, directly supported by the 366th regiment of the former USSR, stationed at that time in the town of Khankendi, attacked, from five directions, the town of Khojaly, where approximately 7,000 Azerbaijanis were living. (At the time of the attack, there were about 3,000 inhabitants in the town.) By that time, Khojaly had already been under siege by Armenian armed subdivisions for more than four months. The town's inhabitants were in desperate need of medical assistance and food, and among them there were many sick and wounded people, elderly persons, and women and children.

The Armenian bandit units, with the help of foreign mercenaries, obliterated Khojaly from the face of the earth that night. With the support of numerous heavy combat weapons and materiel belonging to the 366th regiment, the town was completely destroyed and burned down. The unarmed peaceful civilian population was subjected to monstrous butchery. Children, women, elderly people and sick persons were destroyed with unprecedented brutality. At the end of the twentieth century, Armenian armed units had perpetrated yet another historic crime — the Khojaly genocide, which brought shame upon civilized humanity. The purpose of this monstrous act was to destroy the town's entire population. Nevertheless, some of the inhabitants of Khojaly, by sheer chance, remained alive, involuntarily becoming witnesses to this grievous tragedy.

As a result of this latest case of genocide, the Khojaly genocide, perpetrated by Armenian illegal armed units against the Azerbaijani people, 613 persons were murdered and 1,275 peaceful inhabitants were taken hostage. To this day, the fate of 150 of them is unknown. As a result of the tragedy, more than 1,000 peaceful inhabitants, who received bullet wounds of varying degrees of severity, became invalids; 106 women, 83 small children, and 70 elderly persons were killed. Seventy-six of those who became invalids were boys and girls who had not yet come of age.

As a result of this military and political crime, eight families were completely destroyed, 25 children lost both parents, and 130 children lost one parent.

With particular cruelty and mercilessness, 56 *shekhid* (martyrs) were burned alive. They were scalped, their heads were severed, and their eyes thrust out, and the stomachs of pregnant women were stabbed repeatedly with bayonets.

It is difficult to imagine that such cruelty and acts of brutality perpetrated by man occurred at the end of the twentieth century, before the eyes of the entire world! However, the world must know: the perpetrators of this historic crime, directed not only against the Azerbaijanis, but also against all civilized humanity, are the "long-suffering Armenian people".

For the past 11 years, we the people of Khojaly, living as refugees with pain and at the same time great hope in our hearts, appeal to all peace-loving peoples on earth and to international organizations. We ask you not to remain indifferent and unconcerned about the suffering caused to us and our grief as a result of Armenian armed aggression. We do not believe that authoritative international organizations like the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and peace-loving, powerful countries, are unable to force an aggressive State like Armenia, which is imposing its will on the international community, to observe justice and the norms of international law!

We are certain that the world community will condemn the military aggression by Armenia against Azerbaijan and will assist in ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, bringing about the return of more than 1 million refugees and displaced persons to their homes, and achieving a peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorny Karabakh conflict in the context of historic political justice.

We, the people of Khojaly, experienced profound sorrow upon learning of the monstrous terrorist attack that led to the mass destruction of thousands of innocent people in the United States of America on 11 September 2001. This terrible tragedy brought us back to the events that took place 11 years earlier. Eleven years ago, we, the people of Khojaly, and tens of thousands of Azerbaijani refugees and displaced persons personally experienced such terrible grief, and today we are living in tents, train carriages, dugouts, and cellars, sharing the bitter fate of refugees.

We, the witnesses of the Khojaly genocide, who by a miracle remained alive, strongly condemn the terrorist acts of 11 September and, with great hope, once again appeal to the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as well as all progressive world public opinion and once more draw their attention to the need for a political and legal assessment of the Khojaly genocide.

We, the people of Khojaly, who endured one of the most terrible tragedies of the twentieth century, call upon the peoples of the world to undertake a joint struggle for peace and security. We sound the alarm and call upon all international organizations and peace-loving, authoritative States in the world to mobilize all forces to eliminate the hotbeds of war throughout the world and to struggle for a free, happy human society, living in conditions of peace and tranquillity and prospering with every new day!